

Sources of Additional Information

For further information on training and certification for police, fire, and emergency dispatchers, contact:

☛ National Academy of Emergency Medical Dispatch, 139 East South Temple, Suite 530, Salt Lake City, UT 84111.

Internet: <http://www.naemd.org>

☛ Association of Public Safety Communications Officials, 2040 S. Ridgewood, South Daytona, FL 32119-2257.

Internet: <http://www.apcointl.org>

☛ International Municipal Signal Association, 165 East Union St., P.O. Box 539, Newark, NY 14513-1526.

Internet: <http://www.imsafety.org>

For general information on dispatchers, contact:

☛ Service Employees International Union, AFL-CIO, CLC, 1313 L St. NW., Washington, DC 20005-4100. Internet: <http://www.seiu.org>

☛ American Train Dispatchers Association, 1370 Ontario St., Cleveland, OH 44113. Internet: <http://www.ble.org/atdd/dwv.html>

Information on job opportunities for police, fire, and emergency dispatchers is available from personnel offices of State and local governments or police departments. Information about work opportunities for other types of dispatchers is available from local employers and State employment service offices.

(See introduction to the section on material recording, scheduling, dispatching, and distributing occupations for information on working conditions, training requirements, and earnings.)

Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks

(O*NET 58028)

Nature of the Work

Shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks keep records of all goods shipped and received. Their duties depend on the size of the establishment and the level of automation employed. Larger companies typically are better able to finance the purchase of computers and other equipment to handle some or all of a clerk's responsibilities. In smaller companies, a clerk maintains records, prepares shipments, and accepts deliveries. Working in both environments, shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks may lift cartons of various sizes.

Shipping clerks are record keepers responsible for all outgoing shipments. They prepare shipping documents and mailing labels, and make sure orders have been filled correctly. Also, they record items taken from inventory and note when orders were filled. Sometimes they fill the order themselves, obtaining merchandise from the stockroom, noting when inventories run low, and wrapping it or packing it in shipping containers. They also address and label packages, look up and compute freight or postal rates, and record the weight and cost of each shipment. Shipping clerks also may prepare invoices and furnish information about shipments to other parts of the company, such as the accounting department. Once a shipment is checked and ready to go, shipping clerks may move the goods from the plant—sometimes by forklift truck—to the shipping dock and direct its loading.

Receiving clerks perform tasks similar to those of shipping clerks. They determine whether orders have been filled correctly by verifying incoming shipments against the original order and the accompanying bill of lading or invoice. They make a record of the shipment and the condition of its contents. In many firms, receiving clerks use hand-held scanners to record bar codes on incoming products or by entering it into a computer. These data then can be transferred to the appropriate departments. The shipment is checked for any discrepancies in quantity, price, and discounts. Receiving clerks may route or move shipments to the proper department, warehouse section, or stockroom. They may also arrange for adjustments with shippers whenever merchandise is lost or damaged. Receiving clerks in small businesses also may perform duties similar to those of stock clerks. In larger establishments, receiving clerks may control all receiving-platform operations, such as truck scheduling, recording of shipments, and handling of damaged goods.



Shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks are responsible for tracking all outgoing and incoming shipments of goods transferred between businesses, suppliers, and customers.

Traffic clerks maintain records on the destination, weight, and charges on all incoming and outgoing freight. They verify rate charges by comparing the classification of materials with rate charts. In many companies, this work may be automated. Information either is scanned, or is hand-entered into a computer for use by accounting or other departments within the company. Also, they keep a file of claims for overcharges and for damage to goods in transit.

Employment

Shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks held about 774,000 jobs in 1998. Nearly 2 out of 3 were employed in manufacturing or by wholesale and retail establishments. Although jobs for shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks are found throughout the country, most clerks work in urban areas, where shipping depots in factories and wholesale establishments usually are located. (For information shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks working for the U.S. Postal Service, see the statement on postal clerks and mail carriers elsewhere in the *Handbook*).

Job Outlook

Employment of shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks is expected to grow more slowly than the average for all occupations through 2008. Employment growth will continue to be affected by automation, as all but the smallest firms move to hold down labor costs by using computers to store and retrieve shipping and receiving records.

Methods of material handling have changed significantly in recent years. Large warehouses are increasingly automated, using equipment such as computerized conveyor systems, robots, computer-directed trucks, and automatic data storage and retrieval systems. Automation, coupled with the growing use of hand-held scanners and personal computers in shipping and receiving departments, has increased the productivity of these workers.

Despite technology, job openings will continue to arise due to increasing economic and trade activity, and because certain tasks cannot be automated. For example, someone needs to check shipments before they go out and when they arrive to ensure everything is in order. In addition to job growth, openings will occur because of the need to replace shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks who leave the occupation. Because this is an entry-level occupation, many vacancies are created by normal career progression.

Related Occupations

Shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks record, check, and often store materials that a company receives. They also process and pack goods for shipment. Other workers who perform similar duties are stock clerks, material clerks, distributing clerks, routing clerks, express clerks, expeditors, and order fillers.

Sources of Additional Information

General information about shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks can be obtained from:

☛ National Retail Federation, 325 Seventh St. NW., Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20004. Internet: <http://www.nrf.com/nri/>

(See introduction to the section on material recording, scheduling, dispatching, and distributing occupations for information on working conditions, training requirements, and earnings.)

Stock Clerks

(O*NET 49021, 58023, and 58026)

Nature of the Work

Stock clerks receive, unpack, check, store, and track merchandise or materials. They keep records of items entering or leaving the stock room and inspect damaged or spoiled goods. They sort, organize, and mark items with identifying codes, such as prices or stock or inventory control codes, so that inventories can be located quickly and easily. In larger establishments, where they may be responsible for only one task, they are called *inventory clerk*, *stock-control clerk*, *merchandise*



Stock clerks are responsible for sorting, organizing, and marking items with identifying codes so that inventories can be located quickly and easily in warehouses and stores.

distributor, order filler, property custodian, or storekeeper. In smaller firms, they may also perform tasks usually handled by shipping and receiving clerks. (A separate statement on shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks appears elsewhere in this section of the *Handbook*.)

In many firms, stock clerks use hand-held scanners connected to computers to keep inventories up to date. In retail stores, stock clerks bring merchandise to the sales floor and stock shelves and racks. In stockrooms and warehouses, they store materials in bins, on floors, or on shelves. They may also be required to lift cartons of various sizes.

Employment

Stock clerks held about 2.3 million jobs in 1998, with about 80 percent working in wholesale and retail trade. The greatest numbers were employed in grocery and department stores, respectively. Jobs for stock clerks are found in all parts of the country, but most work in large urban areas that have many large suburban shopping centers, warehouses, and factories.

Job Outlook

Job prospects for stock clerks should be favorable even though employment is expected to grow more slowly than the average for all occupations through 2008. Because this occupation is very large and many jobs are entry level, numerous job openings will occur each year to replace those who transfer to other jobs or leave the labor force.

The growing use of computers for inventory control and the installation of new, automated equipment are expected to slow growth in demand for stock clerks. This is especially true in manufacturing and wholesale trade, industries whose operations are automated most easily. In addition to computerized inventory control systems, firms in these industries rely more on sophisticated conveyor belts and automatic high stackers to store and retrieve goods. Also, expanded use of battery-powered, driverless, automatically guided vehicles can be expected.

Employment of stock clerks who work in grocery, general merchandise, department, apparel, and accessories stores is expected to be somewhat less affected by automation because much of their work is done manually on the sales floor and is difficult to automate. In addition, the increasing role of large retail outlets and warehouses, as well as catalogue, mail, telephone, and Internet shopping services should bolster employment of stock clerks and order fillers in these sectors of retail trade.

Related Occupations

Workers who also handle, move, organize, and store materials include shipping and receiving clerks, distributing clerks, routing clerks, stock supervisors, and cargo checkers.

Sources of Additional Information

State employment service offices can provide information about job openings for stock clerks. Also, see clerical and sales occupations elsewhere in the *Handbook* for sources of additional information.

General information about stock clerks can be obtained from:

☛ National Retail Federation, 325 Seventh Street NW., Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20004. Internet: <http://www.nrf.com/nri/>

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Office and Administrative Support Supervisors and Managers

(O*NET 51002A and 51002B)

Significant Points

- Most jobs are filled by promoting individuals from within the organization, very often from the ranks of clerks they subsequently supervise.